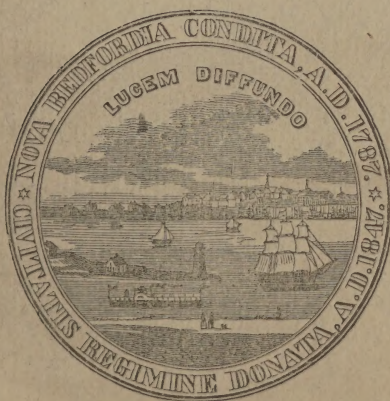


PROCEEDINGS  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
LAYING THE CORNER-STONE  
OF THE  
LIBRARY EDIFICE,  
FOR THE  
FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY,  
OF THE  
CITY OF NEW BEDFORD,

AUGUST 28, 1856.



NEW-BEDFORD:  
E. ANTHONY, PRINTER TO THE CITY.

1856.

PLACING THE CORNER STONE

LIBRARY

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY





# PROCEEDINGS

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E. ANTHONY, PRINTER TO THE CITY.

1856.



At a meeting of the Board of Commissioners held  
Sept. 1st, it was

*Voted*, That the Committee of Publication request  
of his Honor, the Mayor, and James B. Congdon, and  
Charles T. Congdon, Esqs., copies of the Addresses  
delivered by them, for publication.

Also, That they cause 2,000 copies to be printed of  
the proceedings on the occasion of our Corner-Stone  
Ceremonial.

ABNER J. PHIPPS, *Clerk*.



## PROCEEDINGS.

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THE Corner-Stone of the edifice for the Free Public Library of the City of New Bedford, was, in accordance with the arrangements made by the Building Commissioners, laid on Thursday the 28th day of August, 1856.

At three o'clock on that day, the Commissioners assembled at the office of the Mayor, at the City Hall.

At half after three o'clock, a procession was formed on Market Square, South side of the City Hall, which was arranged as follows :

1. Assistant Marshal.
2. New Bedford Brass Band.
3. Marshal.
4. Ex-Mayors of the City.
5. Clergy.
6. Aldermen and Ex-Aldermen of the City.
7. Members of the Common Council.
8. Ex-Members of the Common Council.
9. Architect and Contractor.
10. City Clerk, Clerk of the Common Council and City Treasurer.
11. School Committee.
12. Other City Officers.
13. Citizens Generally.

At the hour last above named, the procession moved into Sixth street, and from thence to the site of the building, through Union and Purchase streets.

In the meantime the Building Commissioners had assembled at the same spot, and there they received the procession upon its arrival.

The gathering, one of the largest and most respectable ever assembled in New Bedford, was then called to order by his Honor the Mayor, who introduced the exercises by the following remarks :

FELLOW CITIZENS :—We are now assembled, for the purpose of laying the Corner-Stone of an edifice for the *first* Free Public Library ever instituted.

As a fitting and appropriate commencement of the exercises incident to the occasion, the Throne of Grace will be addressed by the Rev. Henry W. Parker, now in attendance for that purpose.

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## PRAYER.

BY THE REV. H. W. PARKER.

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OUR Father who art in Heaven : Hallowed be Thy name. We adore Thee, Creator of all things, our Maker and Preserver. We bless Thee for this auspicious day, which rejoices in the sunshine of Thy smile, and the glories of the season, ordered in all its changes by Thee. Thou art the source of all light, beauty and joy—the fountain of all power and grace.

Most fervently would we praise Thee, on this happy occasion, for the glorious Gospel of Thy dear Son, in whose name we come to Thee, and through whom every blessing descends to us. We acknowledge Thy Gospel as the foundation of our civil institutions—the great promoter of truth and liberty, of peace and enterprise. To its influence we thankfully refer the social elevation, the high intellectual advantages and the commercial prosperity of this and every like community—all things that make possible the establish-



ment and success of such an institution as this—a Library as free to all, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, as the air of heaven and the grace of God.

To Thee we owe our being, our capacities of intelligence, and the faculties for those arts which have gathered and conveyed to us the rich stores of human knowledge. To Thee we owe our success in every undertaking; if the Lord build not the house, they labor in vain who build it.

In Thy name, and the name of Thine ever blessed Son, our Lord, we lay this Corner-Stone; let Thy blessing be upon the foundation, and these rising walls, and upon all the progress of this matter, and its results. Let no accident mar the joy of the work, nor any evil interrupt it. Grant Thy protection to this edifice continually; guard it from the warring elements of nature, and from the storms of national strife and calamity. Continue to us especially that civil freedom, without which this institution would be shorn of its glory and its good. May Thy Spirit inspire the hearts of our citizens with the liberality needful to sustain it; and here may it stand, in all coming time, to conserve our rights, to radiate light, to be a bulwark of virtue and true religion, and a blessing to the aged and the young, generation after generation.

May similar benign institutions spring up everywhere, until all men shall possess the lofty advantages which we enjoy. Purify, we pray Thee, our literature, advance its character and interests, and cause it to send abroad a salutary influence, to the ends of the world.

Command Thy blessing now on all who have been in any way engaged in this work—upon architect and artizan—upon this favored city, its magistrates, its officers, and all its population. Attend us in the exercises of this hour. Bless our common country; may peace and truth, freedom and righteousness, triumph here and everywhere; and may Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is done in heaven. All which we ask for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN.

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His Honor, George Howland, Jr., Mayor of the City and Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, then addressed the people.



## ADDRESS

BY THE HON. GEORGE HOWLAND, JR., MAYOR.

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BEFORE proceeding to the mechanical portion of this interesting ceremony, I will, in a few words, give some account of the rise and progress of the Institution, for the purposes of which this structure, now about to be erected, is mainly to be appropriated.

On the 24th of 5th month (May) 1851, an Act was passed by the Legislature of Massachusetts, giving authority to towns and cities to establish Free Libraries for the use of the inhabitants.

On the 8th of 7th mo. (July) of the same year, Warren Ladd, a member of the Common Council from Ward One, introduced an order into that branch of the City Government "for the raising of a Committee to consider the expediency of establishing in this city a Free Public Library;" this order was adopted in the Common Council, but was non-concurred in by the Board of Aldermen. This is believed to be the first order ever introduced into any representative body for the establishment of such an institution; and to this gentleman, must and does belong the honor, of having taken the initiatory step towards the establishment of a library for the public by the people themselves.

On the 27th of 5th mo. (May) 1852, a petition signed by James B. Congdon and others, asking an

appropriation for the establishment of a Free Library, was presented to the City Council and referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Public Instruction, who reported on the 14th of 6th mo. (June) following, recommending an appropriation of fifteen hundred dollars for the establishment and maintenance of a Public Library.

The Committee stated, that they were influenced in making the recommendation, by a communication from the proprietors of the "Social Library," containing about five thousand volumes, offering it "as a basis for the Free Public Library, to give it a position for immediate and extensive usefulness, and to open to the inhabitants the means of innocent enjoyment and useful acquisition, and be a source of commendable pride to our citizens."

This recommendation was adopted; and the library was established in the room it now occupies, on Union street, under the direction of a Board of Trustees, consisting of the Mayor, the President of the Common Council, the Chairman of the Committee on Public Instruction, and three others selected from the citizens at large, which last are annually chosen by the City Council. The Library thus established has been, and continues to be, a source of pleasure and profit to a very large portion of our citizens.

On the 23d of 5th mo. (May) 1853, the gentleman before alluded to, who introduced the original order, offered another; "instructing the Committee on Public Property to inquire into the expediency of erecting a fire proof building on the lot of land owned by the City on William street, suitable for the accommodation of the Free Public Library, and for other purposes;" which order was adopted in concurrence.

The attention of the City Council was next called to the subject in the 6th mo. (June) 1854, by a special report of the Trustees, and again in the next annual report of the same body, urging the necessity of providing a safer and more convenient depository for the books. It was still further commended to them in the Inaugural Address of the Mayor in the 4th mo. (April) 1855, whose recommendation was referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Public Property, who subsequently reported in favor of the erection of a suitable building. After some months spent in the discussion of the merits of different situations, it was finally located on the site we now occupy; but as the season was far advanced, it was not thought best to proceed with the work until another year.

In the 5th mo. (May) of the present year, the papers relating to the subject, were taken from the files and referred to the Committee on Public Property and the Trustees of the Library, who, after considering thereon, reported to the Council, proposing the location of the building, where the foundation now rests, which report was accepted, and they were appointed Commissioners to procure plans and superintend the erection of the building, and were authorized to go forward with the work without delay.

The Commissioners, after advertising for and receiving proposals from several persons for the construction of the building, according to plans and specifications drawn by Solomon K. Eaton, the architect of the building, which had been adopted by them, entered into a contract with Henry Pierce, of this city, to erect and complete the building, towards the accomplishment of which, he has progressed as you now see.

We will now proceed to lay the Corner Stone.



The box, containing the articles which had been collected for the purpose, was then placed in the cavity prepared for it.

The Corner-Stone was then hoisted, and suspended over the spot it was to occupy.

A burnished steel trowel, with a mahogany handle, mounted with silver, was then handed to the Mayor by the Contractor and Master Builder, Mr. Henry Pierce. The Stone being properly bedded it was lowered into its place and accurately adjusted.

The Mayor then concluded his Address as follows :

That the library to be located in the building, the Corner-Stone of which we have now laid, may ever continue to receive, as it has thus far received, the fostering care of the City Government, and that the rich treasures with which its shelves will be stored, may be a means of healthful and agreeable recreation, not only to us of the present day, but to our children and our children's children through all coming generations, is the fervent desire, and may I not say the fervent prayer of those who have been instrumental in promoting this great public work ; a work which will redound to the credit of our city, when we who are now participating in these exercises shall have gone hence to be seen of men no more forever.

The exercises at the site of the Library Edifice being finished, the procession was again formed, and, preceded by the Commissioners, moved to the City Hall.

Every seat, but those reserved for the procession, was already filled, and but a small proportion of the people assembled in the Square could enter.

After some appropriate and beautifully executed music by the New Bedford Brass Band, the exercises commenced and proceeded in the following order :

## H Y M N .

Written for the occasion by the Rev. H. W. PARKER,  
And sung by a Choir of Children from the Public Schools, under  
the direction of Mr. JASON WHITE.

We bless Thee, Lord, that nature's plan,  
Embraced the noble work of man ;  
The granite mount, the coral isle,  
Are Thine, and Thine the chiseled pile.

Nor less we praise Thee for the lore  
This hive of knowledge yet may store ;  
The brain and tongue, the pen and press,  
Thy wisdom own, Thy power confess.

Thou, too, hast writ creation's page,  
And hast unrolled, from age to age,  
The scroll of Time, and kindled bright  
Pure Fancy's fire and Reason's light.

Be this a lighthouse of the mind,  
Shining with rays of truth refined ;  
Be this a fortress of the free,  
To guard with truth our liberty.

In His great name, the Corner-Stone,  
We plant these walls ; to God alone,  
Maker of earth and sky and sea,  
The kingdom, power and glory be.

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The following Address, prepared at the request of the Commissioners, was then delivered by J. B. Congdon, a member of the Board of Trustees, and as such, one of the Building Commissioners.

# ADDRESS

BY JAMES B. CONGDON, ESQ.

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MR. MAYOR, GENTLEMEN OF THE CITY COUNCIL, AND FELLOW  
CITIZENS :

The work assigned for this day is done.

The CORNER-STONE is laid—the CORNER-STONE of our LIBRARY EDIFICE—of a building for the FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY of New Bedford : our library the first whose doors were ever opened, established by the people and free to all the people : our corner-stone the second\* ever laid, in obedience to the popular will and consecrated to the same exalted purpose.

You have, Mr. Mayor, at the spot of our first assembling, a spot dedicated forever to the cause of a genial culture, to enlightened recreation, intelligence and virtue, given the brief but interesting history of those Municipal proceedings which have resulted in the event which we this day hail with so much joy, and recognize and celebrate by these demonstrations of public attention and regard.

The foundation walls are firmly placed ; the Corner-Stone is immovably fixed in its appropriate position ;

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\*The Corner-Stone of the Boston Public Library was laid Sept. 17th, 1855.



an enlightened and ever to be commemorated public liberality has provided ample means ; devoted, earnest and competent Commissioners have been selected and given themselves to the work ; an Architect, with a large experience, a cultivated taste, and an affluence of that zeal and love of the beautiful and true which finds its highest reward in giving form and fixedness to their creations, has given us arrangements of convenience and elevations of beauty ; a Master Builder has grappled with the undertaking, who, to that clear apprehension of beauty and fitness which lies at the foundation of architectural success, and that practical knowledge without which all architectural affluence were as worthless as the baseless fabric of a vision, unites that love of art, that meritorious striving after excellence, that praiseworthy emulation after a high and enduring reputation, which are an earnest of well-doing, and a pledge that a liberal devotedness of means and a design of skill and beauty can safely be entrusted to his mechanical guardianship.

Thus auspiciously have we commenced our work. Thus do we find on the day devoted to the important and interesting ceremony of placing the Corner-Stone of our edifice, that the forms and the forces by whose combination and harmonious action the work is to be accomplished are all arranged and marshalled, and give to all an assurance of a speedy and perfect consummation.

Allow me, fellow-citizens, to congratulate you upon this memorable and auspicious event. Allow me to use the language of a chastened exultation and a reasonable enthusiasm in view of the high position given to us as a community by this noble work, and of the unspeakable advantages which will flow to this people

from the Institution which will have this beautiful edifice as the guardian of its intellectual treasures; the attractive home of the seekers after intellectual enjoyment and wealth; the perennial source and the truthful emblazonry of refinement, high mental cultivation, a correct taste, and a heartfelt love of all things beautiful and pure.

Well may we look with pride and satisfaction upon the work in which our hands are engaged: a work which warm hearts and enlightened understandings have originated and carried forward to a condition, in view of which we are allowed to pronounce with certainty upon a speedy completion and a perfect realization of our most sanguine anticipations. We have a right to be joyous. It becomes us to give the hour of our simple ceremonial to the utterance of words of congratulation and modest triumph. It is good for us to be here.

It is good for us to unite in an invocation for the blessing of Him, who must build the house if the workmen would not labor in vain.

Well is it for us to join with jubilant hearts and voices, aided by music's elevating strain and the breathing thoughts and burning words of the poet, in giving expression to the fulness of our joy at this glorious fruition of our long cherished purposes and hopes. With the ardor of a great and sacred purpose, with the exuberant joyousness of banished anxiety and realized hopes and anticipations, we would invoke the aid of all those instrumentalities which minister at the altar of refinement, patriotism, taste, intellectual culture and an elevated morality, in giving fitting expression to the emotions inspired by the occasion which has convened us.

You, Mr. Mayor, in the brief but comprehensive recital which you have given us of the rise and progress of the Institution whose Corner-Stone you have this day laid, have told a story which will be remembered and cherished by enlightened minds and grateful hearts in all coming time. You have done a good work. The hearty concurrence and earnest devotedness which you have given to this undertaking, an undertaking so potential in its promises of blessing to the people who have bestowed upon you their highest and most honorable place, demand from all, and will receive from an appreciative and grateful constituency, the meed of their approbation and applause. And not only from us will go forth the tribute of heartfelt approval and declarations of earnest and honorable acclaim. The coming generations will, as they rise up, call you blessed. The more deeply they shall drink at the fountain which you and your official predecessors and coadjutors have opened, the more intense will be the sentiments of grateful retrospection with which they will look back upon this day, and upon that elevated and far-reaching activity which gave to them a legacy so valuable and so cherished.

And while we are thus engaged, while the earnest efforts of the past, the rich realizations of the present, and the bright anticipations of the future, mingle into a feeling of deep and thrilling emotion, is it not allowed to us to look upon the work of our hands from a point more elevated than that which circumscribes our vision to the fleeting interests of time?

Man, in the most exalted elements of his character, belongs to a state of never fading joy, of never ceasing progress. He is here to be trained for a higher home, a holier happiness. And can we not, when we regard



with a perfect apprehension the influence which belongs to such an institution as this, when we follow it into the future, and faith and hope surround it with influences so pure and elevating that they constitute golden links in the chain which connects the children of earth with the throne of the Eternal, obtain that higher and holier eminence ?

May we not hallow our proceedings, and give to them a deeper significance and value, by stamping upon them the impress of a Religious sanction and a Christian aim ?

With the thought thus directed, and the heart thus touched to the high issues of an immortal hope, let us lay to heart the words which we have heard.

Let us in the spirit of them of the olden time, when the Leader of the Hosts of Israel "TOOK A GREAT STONE AND SET IT UP" to be a witness unto the people, inasmuch as it had heard all the words he had spoken, here record our vow, that we will sustain this Institution and hand it over, beautified and enlarged, to the fostering care of our children, not only adorned with the graces of intellect and taste, but shining in a brightness borrowed from the effulgence of the Sun of Righteousness.

May He who has given to man the capacity for intellectual acquirement and progress, and the command to employ it ; who has created in the human mind a hunger and thirst after knowledge, and given to His children the key to unlock its exhaustless store-houses ; who has made the earnest and honest work of the mind a delight, and the results of that work a rich and enduring possession ; and who has ordained it to be man's highest glory that he can be trained to a participation in the felicity which belongs to the Infinite

wisdom and purity; may He bless the work of our hands and, for all time, have it under His holy guardianship.

But while our minds are occupied and our hearts are elated with the thoughts and feelings born of this hour of high attainment and confident anticipation, let us be careful, lest the absorbing interests of the present shall cause us to be unjust to the past.

Our municipality has just reached the age of three score years and ten—the time allotted to man—but a brief period in the existence of a community. Let it not be supposed, because we now celebrate the day which is to constitute an era in our local history, that all the days of the seventy years of our municipal being have passed away, leaving no evidence of that regard for the education of the people, and that love of intellectual effort and attainment, which constitute the attractive features of the present movement.

The chronicles of our community are not thus barren.

We need not blush for our beloved city, to have spread before the world the record of its corporate proceedings,—from the time when JOHN PICKENS recorded the vote passed at the first meeting of the inhabitants in 1787—“that there be one person employed as a town schoolmaster in this town,” to the year now approaching its close, when the number of our Public School Teachers is probably greater than that of all the voters present at that first municipal assemblage; and the successor of John Pickens, our present worthy City Clerk, has recorded the official ordinances, by which more than FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS are bestowed upon the Free Schools of the city, and a sum of one half the magnitude, to the FREE

PUBLIC LIBRARY, the crowning glory of our Free School System,—from the date of that same first meeting, when that same honest John, and there are some who hear me who know how eminently he deserved that honorable prefix to his name, recorded in his large round hand the vote, “that John Pickens, (town treasurer) as soon as money sufficient therefor comes into the treasury, shall purchase a rheim of paper for the purpose of making books convenient for the Records and Accompts of said town,” to the present year of our corporate existence, when the printing, books and stationery, called for by the business of the city, cost a larger sum than the whole amount voted for town purposes in the year ONE of our municipal era,—from the time when *two hundred pounds currency*, embraced the whole amount assessed upon the constable’s list of polls and the humble estates of the people, for the support of the town government, to this day of enlarged population and expanded wealth, when the property of our people is numerated by tens of millions; when the list of the fortunate holders fills the pages of the public journals and is gazed upon by the world, not only for its length, but for its grand total of twenty-seven millions of dollars; when the aggregate of the sums appropriated to public uses for the year amounts to about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, three-tenths of which outlay is to be directly expended for the intellectual benefit of the inhabitants.

To provide a schoolmaster, was a part of the business of the first meeting of our people in the first year of their independent existence: to provide for *one hundred* schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, is recorded among the acts of the present year, separated but three score years and ten from the date of our humble beginning.



In each case an enlightened regard for the highest welfare of the people, corporate and individual, gave the impulse to the act.

The principle, that the public good demands a public provision for the education of the people, was understood and obeyed amidst the poverty of the first, as amidst the wealth of the present year of our municipal life.

But not alone to the corporate records of our community are we to look for the fruits of that thoughtful and conscientious activity which springs from a clear view of man's highest good, and which results in self-denying effort and a generous devotion of means for its promotion.

There is a history, born not of the acts of town-meeting majorities and orders in council, not recorded by official chroniclers or executed by official stipendiaries, not less interesting and honorable than that which is to be gathered from our corporation annals.

Upon its first page, is impressed the name of a man, whose commanding form and noble and venerable features, will, when that name shall be spoken, become distinctly, I had almost said luminously, visible to the mind's eye of many who now hear me.

\*WILLIAM ROTCH, lived in this community a long and useful life, an honor and a blessing to our people and the world. That beautiful and elevated site, which nearly half a century ago was dedicated to the sacred cause of education, and the modest but tasteful structure by which it is occupied, were the offering of his enlarged understanding and philanthropic spirit to the cause of learning and virtue.

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□ See Note A.

It may be, that but few who have been trained within its walls, have been known to the world as the recipients of civic or academic honors.

A wise head, an honest heart, and a happy home, are better than fame or fortune, a sceptred hand, or a laureled brow.

And many there have been, and many there are now, who as participants in the bounty of William Rotch, the founder and munificent benefactor of the Friends' Academy, and as pupils of a \*BREWER, a \*GREENE, a \*PAGE, or a \*PHIPPS, have exhibited in their characters and lives the commanding and enduring influence of a spotless example, and of instruction, imparted and received with those concomitants of conscientiousness and courtesy which make virtue lovely and knowledge a delight.

May the mild wisdom, the simple energy, the unwavering adherence to the right, which made the founder of our only academic institution so bright a pattern of manliness of character and Christian usefulness, give light, and guidance, and strength, to those, many of whom are rich in an alliance close and cherished to their worthy predecessor, who now administer its affairs. May prosperity attend upon every effort to increase its efficiency and extend its influence. And when the second half of the century shall close upon its career, may it be then, as now, rich in a history of usefulness, and strong in the guardianship of the wise, the good, and the honored of our people.

Turn we now, to a more recently written page in the annals of private worth and individual and enlightened munificence. It is still moist with the tear

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\*See Note B.

of bereavement. It speaks of one who, but yesterday, trod the streets of our city, and who was seen in all the marts of business. It tells us of a man, who, as a merchant, had few rivals and no superior; endowed with a sagacity that seldom erred, an activity that never faltered, a prudence that gave no audience to the spirit of speculation, a self-reliance that asked not the aid of counsellors, and a comprehensiveness of mercantile attainment that rendered such aid unnecessary: upright in heart, as he was firm in purpose.

Such was the individual in whose testament are found these words; words so honorable to him as a man, so Christianlike in their spirit and purpose:

"I wish particularly to impress upon the minds of my children, and of the community, the sense which I entertain of the vast importance of the thorough moral, intellectual, and religious training of Young Females, and my strong desire that this fund may be applied in the best manner to that great object."

Such are the declarations with which \*GEORGE HOWLAND closes that part of his will, by which he *definitely*, appropriates Fifty Thousand Dollars, and *potentially*, One Hundred Thousand Dollars, for the establishment and maintenance of a SCHOOL FOR YOUNG FEMALES.

Such words spurn the aid of amplification; such an act is its own eulogy—the words a coronal of light, crowning the deed with a celestial radiance—apples of gold in pictures of silver, the realization of the Christian idea of a Christian stewardship.

Deem it not, Mr. Mayor, presumptuous in me, or in conflict with the proprieties of this occasion, to give utterance to the thought which at this moment takes

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\*See Note C.



precedence of every other in the minds of those who have listened to this brief and imperfect recital. I should be doing violence to that all pervading sentiment, and false to my own ardent desire and deep convictions of duty, did I fail, while I here recall to recollection the more than princely gift which GEORGE HOWLAND has laid upon the altar dedicated to Female usefulness, elevation and purity, to express the hope, a hope that maketh not ashamed, that it may be found consistent with that enlightened sense of duty which I am assured will ever guide the fraternal councils of those who are to decide into what channels the waters of this fountain shall flow, to allow them to irrigate and make beautiful and fruitful the spot of the honored donor's birth, of his long, useful and successful life, where he closed his earthly career, and where his cherished remains have their resting place.

May it be *here* that this monument of Christian munificence shall be reared, here that its informing and elevating influence shall be felt through all coming time. *Here*, that we and our children and our children's children, we handing down to them the name, familiar as household-words to us, of him who has thus conferred upon us and upon them this bountiful benefaction, may not only be made wiser and better by its teachings, but may have it ever before us, rich in its suggestions of grateful memories, and ever pouring around it a light to guide the prosperous and philanthropic in the pathway of duty, usefulness and honor.

A distant seat\* of learning has been made richer by the wealth of the father, and wiser by the counsels of the son; shall we not be allowed to hold fast to the

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\*See Note D.

hope, that the wealth and the wisdom, by this testament consecrated to the "Great Object" of female, mental, moral, and religious culture, may find AT HOME a field for the exercise of their elevating and refining influences.

Between these two illuminated pages, there are, in this record dedicated to the registry of private and unostentatious liberality, many others, glowing with the brightness of enlightened views, elevated motives, and noble purposes.

The founder of the Friends' Academy had in his noble son, the second\* William, a faithful and enlightened coadjutor.

More than one-third of the fund now held by that institution, a fund, with pride and pleasure I advert to the fact, which is now rearing the walls of an edifice, whose solid character and harmonious proportions are significant, I trust, of the strength and beauty which are to attend upon the future career of that honored seminary, was given by him.

With these, and others which my limited time will not allow me to name, we find associated the husband of the daughter of the first and sister of the second,† Samuel Rodman; a name which will always be held in cherished remembrance by every one familiar with this truly noble specimen of a Christian gentleman.

That daughter‡, sister and wife, ELIZABETH RODMAN, a woman worthy of this triple alliance with true refinement and exalted worth, has just departed from among us, after a life protracted to near a century, leaving behind her a memory fragrant with all the attractiveness which belongs to a character beauti-

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\*See Note E. †See Note F. ‡See Note G.

ful in all its aspects, harmonious in all its proportions.

“TO RODMAN EVERY VIRTUE UNDER HEAVEN.”

Brief as is the time allowed me I may not leave unnoticed the fact, that in a distant State, an institution for the education of the young, for the endowment of which a large portion of the property of another of this family of Christian philanthropists was devoted, is now a useful and flourishing School for the Destitute.

THOMAS ROTCH, a son of the first William, was early a settler in the State of Ohio, and died there, leaving no children. His widow, \*CHARITY RODMAN ROTCH, each of whose names is suggestive of whatsoever things are lovely and of good report, was the sister of him who was the husband of that noble woman, whose name has just been uttered. While she lived, which was but two years after the death of her husband, she was there, as she had been here, and every where, the friend of the poor and afflicted; and when she died, true to the principles which had been the guide of her life, after other claims upon her humanity and affection were satisfied, she bequeathed the balance of her property, about twelve thousand dollars, to endow a Manual Labor School for the education of orphan and destitute children. A careful and judicious administration has increased that bequest to a fund of FORTY THOUSAND DOLLARS. Thus has Ohio an Orphan's Home, and a richly endowed educational institution, whose origin may be traced to means here accumulated, and a benevolence first exercised on the banks of the Acushnet, where from her home on Water Street, subsequently the home of her brother, CHARITY ROTCH fed the hungry and clothed the naked, and poured the

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\*See Note H.



balm of Christian consolation into the bosoms of the afflicted.

Turn we now to another, a humbler it may be, but not less pertinent and interesting portion of our local annals.

We have, to-day, laid the corner-stone of a noble edifice, destined to be the ornate and enduring receptacle and safeguard of our Bibliothecal Treasures. We have come hither, a multitude of interested and gratified people, united in a work, worthy the energies and honorable to the reputation of a wealthy and an enlightened municipality. Instrumentalities in harmony with the generous excitements and earnest purposes of the occasion have come at our bidding, and have given to these proceedings the eclat and consecratedness which attend upon the acts of constituted authority, and the demonstrations of the concentrated potency of a united and intelligent people.

Fifty-three years ago, a mechanic's apprentice sat upon his bench in the humble workshop of his master, situated upon Water street, near what was in those days the centre of the business and population of the village, the FOUR CORNERS.\*

With an associate, like himself a youth and an apprentice, he spoke of his desire to read, and of the impossibility of finding in the village the books which the gratification of that desire demanded.

Knowledge, to the eyes of this young man, had not unrolled her ample page, but the genial current of the soul had not been frozen. These frequent colloquies heightened the sense of deprivation and the desire to

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\* See Note I.

provide a remedy, until the resolution was taken whose issues are found in the ceremonial of this occasion.

The determination was formed that there should be a library in the village of Bedford. The associate held the pen of a ready writer, and by him was the paper drawn up to be offered to the people for their signatures and contributions. With this paper in his hand, WILLIAM HOWLAND ALLEN, in the brief moments of leisure allowed him, called upon such of the inhabitants as he supposed willing to aid in the object, and the BEDFORD SOCIAL LIBRARY was established. The \*nidus was an unfinished room in a building near the foot of Union street, still standing.

Upon the list of those present at the first meeting are found the names of ABRAHAM SHEARMAN JR., and JOHN MASON WILLIAMS ; names never spoken but with veneration and respect by all whose memories and associations carry them back to our early history. The association was formed, the officers chosen, and the work commenced.

With the youth who had given the first impulse to the movement, were associated the two gentlemen whose names I have mentioned, as a committee to make the first purchases.

Books were now accessible; and from that time to the present, this social depository, in some form or other, has been open to the public, affording to our people the means of elevated recreation and intellectual and moral training.

I have given the names of three citizens of our then little community, the fast moving moments must be my apology for the restriction, as influential at the humble

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\* See Note J.

genesis of the undertaking, which, under the fostering care of individual and municipal liberality and wisdom, has expanded into an institution of communal magnitude and interest. The senior of these has gone to his rest.

“Green be the turf above thee,  
Friend of my early days ;  
None knew thee but to love thee,  
None named thee but to praise.”

It would be difficult to recall to mind of those early among us, one more worthy of honorable mention at this hour than \*ABRAHAM SHEARMAN, JR. As the printer and publisher of the first book and the second newspaper ever issued from a New Bedford printing press ; as a Director of the Social Library ; as a Trustee of the Friends Academy ; as President of our first, our most cherished and influential literary society, the Old Dialectic ; as the writer of many useful contributions to the press, and of a metrical Address to Lord Byron, whose poetic beauties attract the scholar, while its deep and earnest religious spirit gives delight to the Christian ; as a liberal contributor to all movements having in view the public enlightenment or the relief of the suffering, and an efficient co-worker with heart and hand in every such undertaking ; as a sympathizing guide and counsellor to the young, and, in the needful time, a friend and helper to all ; as one who closed a life of Christian obedience and activity by a death of Christian reliance and peace, leaving behind him, not only a memory bright with the attractiveness of a well-spent life, but testamentary arrangements which gave one portion of the accumulations of a long, industrious

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<sup>o</sup> See Note K.



and self-denying life for the relief of the destitute, and another as an Education Fund to aid the struggling children of poverty in their efforts for the attainment of knowledge; this departed friend and benefactor of our community, claims the tribute of our respect and gratitude, and his name a place in our memories and our hearts.

The two yet live, and one of these, after impressing upon our forming tendencies the stamp of a wisdom early matured, and of an intellectual superiority which all acknowledged, giving profitable direction and imparting elevating and refining influences, with a modesty that gave no room for envy, and a quiet inflexibility of purpose which gave supremacy to virtue, and extorted from vice, even, an unwilling tribute to virtue's loveliness, left us in the full vigor of his consecrated abilities, to give them, away from us, to a higher sphere of duty, and a more honored if not more honorable field of action.

But the season for retirement has come; and our early benefactor, upon whom the winter of age has fallen "frostily but kindly," is looking to his early home upon the banks of the Acushnet, with the purpose in his heart of closing here his protracted and useful life. We tender to him a cordial welcome.

Happy shall we be to enjoy the mellow radiance of the evening, as our fathers did the brighter splendor of the morning light. That the days of the years of the life of JOHN MASON WILLIAMS may be protracted and happy is the aspiration of all.

The third upon the limited list is here, associated with us in the ceremonial so intimately connected with the resolve of the workshop, more than half a century ago.

As active in body, as when a lad he trod with earnest and hasty steps the streets of the village, as genial in spirit, as when, Franklin-like, in the words of Franklin's eulogist made applicable to his humble movement, he was "setting on foot" the first Social Circulating Library known to the annals of our village, he is with us here to day, looking with delight and admiration upon the sturdy and graceful stem and widespread branches of the tree which has sprung from the seed he was instrumental in planting.

When \*John Pickens, town-clerk, recorded the vote providing for one town schoolmaster, and John Pickens, town-treasurer, was clothed with authority to purchase a ream of paper when funds should come into the treasury, he had no prescient visions of a century of schoolmasters, or of a treasury whose annual payments should reach a quarter of a million of dollars.

As little did our friend and fellow-citizen, William H. Allen, suppose, when he set on foot the village Circulating Library, and rejoiced in the means to purchase "Mavor's Voyages and Travels" as the first fruits of the effort, that he was then planting a germ destined to expand into a great and flourishing institution; an institution now the child of the city's adoption, and which the city is proud to sustain and cherish as "THE VERY FIRST FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY KNOWN TO THE ANNALS OF THE WORLD."

It was at a later period, that † WILLIAM SAWYER WALL, an enlightened and estimable Englishman, started, and succeeded in establishing, another collection of books upon the social system.

An association called the New Bedford Library So-

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° See Note L. † See Note M.

ciety, was formed about the year 1808, and a small but valuable collection of books obtained.

Our English fellow citizen was, like his predecessor, the pioneer in the movement, a mechanic: and pursued his calling for many years in the same homely building where we found that pioneer at work when the resolve was formed, whose issues are seen in the ceremonial of this day.

He was a man of refined tastes, of a cultivated understanding and philanthropic spirit.

He loved books, he loved learning, and he loved the society of those who, like himself, found delight and satisfaction in scientific investigation and literary pursuits. Thus we find him, not only active in setting on foot and sustaining the Library Society, but one of the associates of the Old Dialectic.\*

He was its first President, delivered a formal address at his inauguration, and was an active and useful member until his death, which took place but a few years after it was established.

It is believed that previously to either of these movements, a few individuals had associated and purchased Dobson's Encyclopedia, a work whose publication had commenced in Philadelphia during the latter part of the eighteenth century, and which was finished during the second or third year of the present.

This was for many years a distinct organization.

Caleb Green, at one period of his life "the School Master in this town," had the keeping and delivery of the volumes: and his store was in the building contiguous to that already noticed, as having been

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\* See Note N.



the workshop of both the first movers of our library enterprise.

These volumes are now upon our shelves, having been made over by the proprietors, to the Social Library, bearing about them unmistakable evidence of the severe service to which they have been subjected.

An arrangement made in 1810, between the two Library Societies and the subsequent transfer of the Encyclopedia, united all the collections and placed them all under the same management.

It was now the NEW BEDFORD SOCIAL LIBRARY; and for a period of over forty years, a part of the time as a Corporation under the laws of the Commonwealth, that Society continued to exist until the year 1852, when the occurrences took place which vested the whole property, a valuable collection of five thousand volumes, in the city of New Bedford.

His Honor, the Mayor, has given us briefly but luminously, the history of the movement by which that result was accomplished, and has paid a just tribute to that sagacity and public spirit which inaugurated the proceedings.

We found, half a century ago, a lad upon the workbench, animated by a resolve, soon by his labors to become a reality, that the seekers after books in the Village of Bedford should not seek in vain.

At the close of that period, we have found another LADD, animated by a like generous and enlightened spirit, coming before the Council of the city, and in the name of the people, demanding an extension, to this community, of the wise and beneficent legislation of the State Government.

The people were heard, and the name of WARREN LADD irrevocably associated with the second semi-cen-

ennial epoch in the educational annals of our community.

And both are here to-day, with a commendable exultation sharing in our simple ceremonial, and wondering, it may be, how with \*railroad speed, and I trust with more than railroad safety, the work is advancing, which we are bound to regard as the crowning act in our municipal history.

As I bring my desultory remarks to a close, I feel as if some apology might be expected from me, for lingering so long, I had almost said so lovingly, among the records and memories of the olden time.

Should regret or censure be in the thought of any because of this, perhaps it may modify, to some extent, the intensity of the feeling when it is remembered, that these records are fast disappearing and these memories fast fading out.

I would renew the record upon which is written the wise and generous deeds of living worth; and, like Old Mortality in the romance, I would deepen the inscriptions which tell us of the self-sacrificing labors of departed excellence.

It *has* been to me no less a labor of love than of duty. I love to linger around the records and recollections of our early day.

The men and women of the period of our village existence rise before me, clothed with that simple nobility of character, which, in the days of my youth, inspired me with admiration and reverence.

For me, the very costume in which most of them ap-

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\* Mr. Allen has been, and Mr. Ladd now is connected with the management of the N. B. & T. Railroad.

peared, more rarely seen now, than at an earlier day,  
will ever have strong attractions.

It is, no doubt often seen,

That many a heart throbs loyally and true,  
In bosoms draped by fashion's varied hue ;  
While wolf-like meanness and the fox's wile,  
Display a garb on which a Fox might smile.

But still this Friendly dress has charms for me,  
For, "in the light of other days" I see  
By memory pictured in their plain array,  
The men and matrons of an earlier day.

In manners simple, but in thought refined,  
Firm in their faith, but not as bigots, blind :  
While large success their active labors crowned,  
As large a bounty spread its blessings round.

Clear in my sight a reverend group appears,  
Through the long vista of departed years—  
That noble pair, the honored Sire and Son\*,  
Whose days were bright with daily duty done.

The Psalmist's music and the Prophet's fire,  
In THORNTON'S† chant—like eloquence conspire ;  
DAVIS‡ proclaiming with the zeal of Paul,  
The Great Salvation, offered free to all.

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An invitation having been extended to Charles T. Congdon, Esq., of Boston, to deliver a poetical address on the occasion, Mr. Congdon was present and recited the following lines.

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\* Wm. Rotch and Wm. Rotch, Jun. † See Note O. ‡ See Note P.



## P O E M

BY CHARLES T. CONGDON, ESQ.

“Scenes of my youth! awake its silent lyre!  
 Ye winds of memory, fan the slumbering fire!  
 Ray of the past! if yet thou canst appear,  
 Break through the clouds of fancy’s waning year!  
 Brush from her breast the thin autumnal snow,  
 If leaf or blossom yet remain below.”

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As at a feast, ere grosser food is seen,  
 We seek for zest in soup or in sardine,  
 As ere our morning meal, for appetite,  
 We eat six oysters, pingueous and white;  
 So I repeat, to give your stomachs tone,  
 Six lines from Holmes, as relish for my own.

Yet who, returning to the scenes of youth,  
 Can lack the impulse of poetic truth?  
 O who that sings, though scarcely half aright,  
 Th’ auspicious hour that o’er us wings its flight,  
 Could form a lay so feeble and so fond,  
 That no electric chord would here respond?  
 Long sundered love, ’gainst time and distance proof,  
 Prattles once more beneath the natal roof;  
 A thousand gentle memories attend,  
 While smiling spirits o’er the banquet bend.  
 What though a thousand witless fancies fall?  
 The hour makes heart-felt poesy of all.  
 I warm to think, as this bright scene I scan,  
 How it has ended, how it first began.  
 Far from this crowd of manhood and of grace,  
 I wander back o’er half a century’s space,  
 The little town, in sombre garb arrayed,  
 Gleams still through flaunting fashion and parade;  
 I see its fathers, prudent still, yet fain  
 To grow in learning as they grow in gain.  
 Happy for us, this simple truth they knew,

That cash is good, but culture something too.  
 All books were scarce ; most books were somewhat dear,  
 Yet how they sowed the far-brought treasure here !  
 True to their time, but truer to ourselves,  
 Think how editions gathered on their shelves !

Who doubts the power that capital supplies ?  
 Axis of gold, on which the round world flies !  
 Why should I pause, though able, to deduce  
 The medium just 'twixt usury and use ?  
 'Tis better far than weaving idle lays,  
 To take great chance of scorn, and small of praise,  
 The power to gather and the will to give  
 The wealth by which a Library may live.  
 My purse is empty : of the flaccid kind,  
 Which (see Carlyle,) " flings not against the wind ;"  
 Unhappy vacuum ! luxury indeed  
 To give a book which future boys may read !  
 To pay a debt which binds me to the past ;  
 Which blessed my first years and must bless my last !

How, coiled within some alcove's shady nook,  
 A breathless boy will batten on a book ;  
 How, in despite of prurience or taste,  
 Bee-like will wander through the tangled waste !  
 With eager eye accomplish at a glance,  
 Travels and science, logic and romance !  
 Bear, for the hour will bear some tender thought,  
 A simple strain from tenderest memories caught !

How few of all who now its portals seek,  
 Went to the library but once a week !  
 You every day receive its liberal boon ;  
 We went at three, on seventh day afternoon ;  
 Unchecked you banquet on the general fare ;  
 We took a single volume on each share ;  
 Kept it a week ; might keep it three weeks more ;  
 Were fined just nine-pence if we kept it o'er :  
 Well I remember the good man though grave,  
 Who from the shelves the contributions gave ;  
 Well I remember—reason is I should :

He flogged me often, always for my good ;  
 Although I still compare, as I indite,  
 His ruler's tingle with his books' delight !\*  
 That dingy room ! it lacked both light and space,  
 Yet memory gives it architectural grace,  
 For narrow shelves ne'er held such ample feast—  
 'T was really Alexandrian at least !  
 'T was measured always by the books at home,  
 And measured thus it seemed a mental Rome ;  
 A magic realm of wit and wisdom wide,  
 Inviting conquest which it still defied.  
 As taste grows nice and criticism sure,  
 The scholar changes to the epicure ;  
 Manner surpasses matter ; and we think  
 Of inspiration less, and more of ink ;  
 Cato delights us, more delights us still  
 The clean-cut type of graceful Baskerville :  
 And when we know an Elzevir at sight,  
 We gloat above his "gammas" with delight ;  
 Over a volume, when but one's extant,  
 With thievish eyes the antiquaries pant ;  
 But if we trust the heart, not sight, for truth,  
 The books we thumbed and dog's-eared in our youth,  
 Surpass all treasures full of wormy holes,  
 Described by Loundes, or bought by Dr. Choules.

First on the shelf, in phalanx fair arrayed,  
 The bulky compilation Mavor made ;  
 " Voyages and Travels," which, ere steamboats plied,  
 Meant fame or death, discovery or one's hide ;

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\* The allusion here is to George W. Baker, the first schoolmaster and Social Librarian known to me. He was very old fashioned in his ideas of indoctrinating the New Bedford youth, and, as he had in early life been a whaler, he had formed what would in these degenerate days be considered rather an exaggerated estimate of the value of *whaling* in school discipline ; and his custom was to go directly to that part of the human system in which the brains have not by any physiologist, psychologist or transcendentalist been supposed to reside. In spite of his preference for the *fortiter* over the *suaviter*, he was a good teacher, and, as I have suggested, doubtless gave us too little instead of too much ; although I know that we considered ourselves to be sucking Latiners, juvenile Riddleys, real young John Rogerses. without, of course, the multitudinous infantile aggravation.



No traveller then, when starting on his track,  
 Did wife or children hope to welcome back;  
 O doubly blest, if fate would only spare  
 The rash adventurer, *minus* nose and hair!  
 We read and read—to many a South Sea nook  
 Swam in the wake of gallant Capt. Cook;  
 Glanced at the plate, and thought her very fair,  
 That foreign maid, in costume light as air.  
 Do you remember all the fine details?  
 The pomp and pride with which the frigate sails;  
 And how, before they launch upon the ocean,  
 They give the names of captain, mate and “boson”;  
 How as we read we quite familiar grew  
 With that marked race who gloried in tattoo;  
 How shipwreck charmed us; how we glowed to know  
 The boats were off with rations but so-so;  
 And how we thrilled with rapture most profound,  
 When all were landed somewhere safe and sound?

Then those great books, too big for boyish knees,  
 Gigantic Chambers! elephantine Rees!  
 How we discarded all the author states  
 In letter press, and went pop at the plates!  
 What virtuoso looks with pleasure surer,  
 At Raphael Morghen, Sharpe or Albert Drurer.

Then memory tells me there was else to see  
 A museum—we had to beg the key—  
 In which was hung a varnished crocodile,  
 Whose caudal length had vexed, no doubt, the Nile.  
 My own impression, as his jaws I rated,  
 Was that the beast had Egypt decimated;  
 Perhaps (such things will vex the boyish head)  
 Had snapped at Moses, in his bulrush bed;  
 And other wonders from all parts had come,  
 Idols in wood, and monstrous snakes in rum;  
 Barbarous spears, fit bloody deeds to do—  
 The curious paddle and the light canoe.  
 Most has been scattered of that gathering rare;  
 The snakes are dust, the alcohol nowhere!  
 And nothing now of that collection tells,

Save a few tomahawks and twenty shells ;  
 Which, for of praise I do not mean to shirk,  
 The good librarian watches like a Turk.

But though the theme unusual interest lends,  
 Think not the crocodiles were all my friends !  
 When most are false at heart, though true in looks,  
 We wander back to friends we found in books.  
 I do not think the wealth of this proud mart  
 Could tempt one instant my still constant heart,  
 Weighed 'gainst the love which stronger grown through  
                   years,

But shrinks from speech and finds its vent in tears.  
 Not for the joys of Fielding's pictured page  
 Would I exchange the glories of an age ;  
 Not for all fame would I one hour forget  
 How Cowper charmed me, how he charms me yet !  
 First friends stand fastest ; though I own the power,  
 Of those who sway the culture of the hour,  
 More real joy, a nobler hope I find,  
 To cast my faithful, grateful look behind.

'T was nobly done to make the school house free !  
 A nobler school house, fitly founded, see !  
 Not that all lore from reading can be had,  
 For too much reading sometimes makes us mad ;  
 But education, still a life-long friend,  
 Goes on with life, with that can only end.  
 And here to centre all that can relate  
 To human hope, make human nature great ;  
 To cull from distant climes their various thought,  
 Secure the wealth from different sources brought,  
 To fill those shelves with treasures all so rare,  
 That curious travellers come to wander there ;  
 To join together all that makes refined  
 The wisdom, art and fancy of mankind ;  
 To lend to all who hither come to read  
 The utmost help to meet their utmost need ;  
 What ampler work could ample fortune do,  
 To self, to city, to the world more true ?  
 A hundred glorious gardens here we find ;

O culture still this garden of the mind !  
 O plant and water, dear as wealth unbought, :  
 The flower of fancy and the oak of thought.

The world wags wise ; the many lettered age  
 Spreads all it knows on many a printed page ;  
 Time was, before this hour of steam began,  
 Ere paper mills or Hoe's fast presses ran,  
 When in some cloister's solitary shade,  
 The patient author ponderous volumes made.  
 No summer task was his, no idle toil ;  
 The work cost years, and lakes of midnight oil ;  
 And lest the church might curse him for his sins,  
 He rubbed his brains before he spoiled the skins ;  
 And thus brought forth those sober, serious works,  
 In praise of Peter and against the Turks.  
 Crammed to collapse with doctrines orthodox,  
 Crooked Greek roots and dry polemic knocks ;  
 Portly and pious folios, grim, and quite  
 As hard to read as they were hard to write.  
 There was a time when if one simply said :—  
 " Lend me this book ?" the owner shook his head,  
 And smelling thieves in that preposterous call,  
 Padlocked the book, and chained it to the wall ;  
 You, in the spirit of the time's great gain,  
 Have taken off the padlock and the chain ;  
 For this still look, in all the time to be,  
 For youth aspiring, and for manhood free.



The proceedings were closed by singing the following Psalm, to the tune of Old Hundred, the vast assembly rising and joining the youthful Choir in the exercise.

PSALM CXVII.

From all who dwell beneath the skies.  
Let the Creator's praise arise ;  
Let the Redeemer's name be sung,  
In every land by every tongue.

Eternal are thy mercies, Lord,  
Eternal truth attends thy Word,  
Thy name shall sound from shore to shore,  
'Till suns shall rise and set no more.

## APPENDIX.

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### DESCRIPTION OF THE CORNER-STONE AND OF THE ARTICLES DEPOSITED UNDER IT.

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THE Corner-Stone, a block of beautiful Quincy Granite, was laid on the south-east corner of the foundation. The stone is of the following dimensions:—Length, 7 feet 8 inches; breadth, 1 foot; height, 2 feet 8 inches; Weight, one and a half tons.

Under the Corner-Stone, in the stone of the foundation upon which it rests, is a cavity, into which a box, made of copper was placed, of the same dimensions.

The dimensions of the box are as follows:—Length, 12 inches; breadth, 10 inches; height, 4 inches. In the box, the cover of which was securely soldered, were placed the following articles, viz:

1. A parchment roll, upon which is the following inscription:

“CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, August 28, 1856.

“Corner-Stone of the Library Edifice for the Free Public Library, laid the 28th day of August, in the Year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six.”

GEORGE HOWLAND, JR., Mayor, and Chairman of the Board of Building Commissioners.

COMMISSIONERS.—Geo. Howland, Jr., Abner J. Phipps, Charles Almy, James B. Congdon, Simpson Hart, Geo. H. Dunbar, Thomas Wilcox, John K. Cushing, Gustavus Delano, Lewis Hathaway.

TRUSTEES OF THE LIBRARY.—Geo. Howland, Jr., President; Abner J. Phipps, Secretary. James B. Congdon, Simpson Hart, Charles Almy, Geo. H. Dunbar.

LIBRARIAN.—Robert C. Ingraham.

ARCHITECT.—Solomon K. Eaton.

CONTRACTOR.—Henry Pierce.

Town of New Bedford, incorporated February, 1787.

First Town Meeting held March 21, 1787.

City of New Bedford, incorporated March 9, 1847.

First Officers inaugurated April 28, 1847.

Mayor, Abraham H. Howland.

President of the Common Council, James B. Congdon.

2. Address of His Honor, Abraham H. Howland, the Mayor, at the first organization of the City Government, April 28, 1847.

3. Addresses of His Honor, Abraham H. Howland, the Mayor, at the several organizations of the City Government for the years 1848–1849–1850 and 1851, with the Reports for the several years of the Committee on Finance, Overseers of the Poor, Fire Wards and School Committee.

4. Address of His Honor, William J. Rotch, the Mayor, at his inauguration in 1852, with Reports from the same Departments.

5. Addresses of his Honor, Rodney French, the Mayor, at his inauguration in the years 1853 and 1854, with the Reports from the same Departments, and from the Trustees of the Free Public Library.

6. Addresses of His Honor, George Howland, Jr., the Mayor, at his inauguration in the years 1855 and 1856, and the reports from the same Departments.

7. Copy of the Revised Ordinances of the City of New Bedford.

8. A copy of the Regulations of the New Bedford Library, adopted 6 month 1, 1811.

9. Copy of the New Bedford Directory No. 8, 1856, presented by Charles Taber & Co.

10. Four bills, Continental Money, as follows:—One-third of a dollar, Feb. 17, 1775; one dollar, May 10, 1775; six dollars, May 9, 1776; twenty dollars, Sept. 30, 1778; presented by Benjamin Franklin Adams, Esq., of this city.

11. A bill for “Twenty Shillings,” issued by the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island, May, 1786; presented by Charles Almy, Esq.

12. Coins of the United States of America, viz:—One silver dollar, 1799; one silver dollar, 1847; one half dollar, 1855; one dime, 1856; one half dime, 1855; one three cent piece, 1855; one cent, 1856.

13. The original Order, introduced into the City Council for the establishment of a Free Public Library.

14. Issues of the Daily Mercury, August 16, 1856, containing the list of the Tax Payers of fifty dollars and upwards, in the year 1856. Do. August 28, 1856, containing the list of the Tax Payers of Accushnet village in the town of Dartmouth, 1778. Do. Semi-Weekly, August 17, 1856. Do. Weekly, August 22, 1856.

15. Issue of the Daily Standard, August 28, 1856. Do. Weekly, August 28, 1856.

16. Issue of the Tri-Weekly Express, August 28, 1856.

17. Whalemens' Shipping List and Merchants' Transcript, August 26, 1856.

18. Copy of the Address of His Honor the Mayor at the Laying of the Corner-Stone.

19. Copy of the Address of James B. Congdon, Esq., on the same occasion.

20. Copy of the Poem of Charles Taber Congdon, of Boston, delivered on the same occasion.

21. Copy of the Programme, containing the original Hymn written by the Rev. H. W. Parker, and sung by the children of the Public Schools.

22. A card containing a list of the members of the City Government and of the several Committees.

23. A card containing a list of the Trustees of the Free Public Library and Committees.

24. A card containing a list of the members of the School Committee and sub-Committees.

25. A finger-ring made from a piece of the old Bell formerly on the tower of the meeting-house of the First Congregational Society, afterwards Liberty Hall, which was destroyed by fire on the 9th of November, 1854, presented by William Berry, Esq.

25. A piece of the stone from the wall of Westminster Abbey and of the mortar of the same, presented by Ezra Kelley, Esq.

26. A pebble from the grave of John Wesley, presented by Ezra Kelley, Esq.



## AN ACT

TO AUTHORISE CITIES AND TOWNS TO ESTABLISH AND  
MAINTAIN PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives assembled,  
and by the authority of the same, as follows :*

SECTION 1. Any city or town of this Commonwealth is hereby authorized to establish and maintain a public library within the same, with or without branches, for the use of the inhabitants thereof, and to provide suitable rooms therefor, under such regulations for the government of said library as may from time to time be prescribed by the City Council of such city, or the inhabitants of such town.

SEC. 2. Any city or town may appropriate for the foundation and commencement of such library, as aforesaid, a sum not exceeding one dollar for each of its ratable polls, in the year next preceding that in which such appropriation shall be made; and may also appropriate annually, for the maintenance and increase of such library, a sum not exceeding twenty-five cents for each of its ratable polls, in the year next preceding that in which such appropriation shall be made.

SEC. 3. Any town or city may receive in its corporate capacity, and hold and manage, any devise, bequest, or donation, for the establishment, increase, or maintenance of a public library within the same.

[Approved by the Governor, May 24, 1851.]

## AN ORDINANCE

FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND GOVERNMENT OF A FREE  
PUBLIC LIBRARY.

*Be it ordained by the City Council of the city of New Bedford, as follows :*

SEC. 1. There shall annually be chosen by the City Council in convention, by ballot, in the month of April, or as soon after

as may be convenient, three persons, who, together with the Mayor, President of the Common Council, and the Chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on Public Instruction for the time being, shall constitute a Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of the city of New Bedford, who shall hold their office for the current municipal year, and until others are chosen.

SEC. 2. All monies now or hereafter appropriated for said library shall be expended under the direction of said Trustees, who shall have full power to expend the same in the purchase of such books as they may select, and in meeting all the expenditures for the establishment, support and best efficiency of said Institution.

SEC. 3. Said Trustees shall have full power to appoint a Librarian, and all subordinate officers that may be deemed by them expedient,—to fix the salary of the same, to be paid out of the appropriation for the Library, and the same to remove at pleasure.

SEC. 4. They shall also have full power to make any and all needful and suitable regulations concerning said Library and the use thereof, subject to alteration at any time by vote of the City Council.

SEC. 5. Said Trustees shall annually, in the month of March, lay before the City Council a detailed report of their doings and of the condition of the Library.

IN COMMON COUNCIL, August 9, 1852.

Passed to be ordained.

MATTHEW HOWLAND,

President of the Common Council.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, August 16, 1852.

Passed to be ordained.

WILLIAM J. ROTCH, Mayor.

## C O P Y ,

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE PROPRIETORS OF THE SOCIAL  
LIBRARY IN RELATION TO THE TRANSFER OF THE  
SAME TO THE CITY OF NEW BEDFORD.

Whereas under the authority of the Laws of this Commonwealth, the City Council has made an appropriation for the establishment of a Public Library, and it is understood to be the intention of the City Government to maintain and support said Public Library in a condition creditable to the city and useful to the inhabitants, by making an annual appropriation for its support,—and

Whereas, the Proprietors of the New Bedford Social Library believe that the purposes for which this Library was established will now be best promoted by placing it at the disposal of the City Government, to be made a part of said Public Library, therefore,

*Voted*, That the Directors of this Library, to wit, Thomas B. White, Thomas A. Greene, and John F. Emerson, together with Oliver Prescott, be, and they hereby are, authorised to transfer and convey to the city of New Bedford for the purposes of the Public Library, all the books, pamphlets, periodicals, and other property now belonging to the Proprietors of the Social Library—provided, however, that no such transfer shall be made unless the following stipulations shall make a part thereof, and be duly set forth in the deed of conveyance :

1st. That the sum of six hundred dollars be paid to the Treasurer of the Library ;—2d. That if at any time after the transfer, the City Government shall refuse, or neglect, to support and maintain the Public Library, all the books and other property then remaining in the possession of the city, which may have been transferred by virtue of these proceedings, shall revert back to the Proprietors of the Social Library, their successors or assigns, to be disposed of as they may deem proper ;—3d. That the non-resident proprietors shall be permitted to use the public Library, with the same privileges as the citizens of New Bedford.

N. B. S. LIBRARY ROOM, July 26, 1852.

A true copy.

Attest :

EDWARD FALES, Clerk.





EXTRACT FROM THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF  
THE TRUSTEES :

“The Trustees have already placed before the public an abstract of the rules they have instituted to regulate the taking of the books and their use at the Library rooms. By a reference to the advertisement of the Trustees it will be seen, that the foundation they have laid for the use of the Library by those for whose benefit it was founded, is of the most liberal and comprehensive character. The regulations for the use of the books and other property, both in and away from the library-room, are in accordance with the all-embracing principle which governed the legislature, when it gave the sanction of law to this form of aiding in the education of the people, and in harmony with that enlightened municipal action which gave to our citizens the benefit of the statute. A library has been opened for the people, a library accessible to all; the benefits of which, to those who have attained to a suitable age, are as free as the highway to the traveller, as the public school to our children and youth.

“With a plan of delivery and use thus free and comprehensive, it must be obvious to all, that the operations of the library can only be sustained by a most rigid observance of the rules which have been made for its government. It cannot exist for any useful purpose, unless there shall be a prompt compliance on the part of all who visit the rooms or become takers of the books, with the rules which have been established for the safety of the property and its profitable employment. The rules must be observed, or disorder, decay and dissolution will soon attend upon this enlightened and praiseworthy effort to open to the people the avenues to a more extensive and genial culture. The property belongs to the city; it must be cared for and preserved—in its use, all have equal rights which will be infringed upon, if any fail promptly to return, within the specified time, the books they may have taken. Thus it will be seen that there is a double responsibility resting upon all who visit the rooms of the city library and become takers of its books. The trustees would earnestly and confidently express the hope, that this responsibility will be deeply felt, and that every one will bear in mind, that the institution cannot be sustained, unless there shall be found a hearty co-operation on the part of the inhabitants, in the enforcement of the regulations which have been instituted for its safe and profitable management.”

EXTRACT FROM THE SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF  
THE TRUSTEES.

“The great and leading feature in the conception and management of the Library, has been, by the experience of the year which has passed since its opening, fully established.

“The records of our Librarian sustain in the fullest manner the truth of the idea upon which the action of the legislature and of the city was founded—that a Library could be so managed, as to admit all the people to a participation in its benefits. So few in number are the books missing from our shelves, and so carefully, in general, have they been used while in the hands of the takers, that it is not deemed necessary, in this report, to give in detail, the very few instances in which the regulations of the Library have been violated. The Trustees would again express the great satisfaction with which they lay these statements before the City Council. The people have demonstrated, not only by the great extent to which the books have been used, but also by their heedfulness in the use and punctual return of the volumes taken, that they can be reliably entrusted with the care of the property which the enlightened liberality of the public has set apart for their recreation and improvement.

“Still a renewal of the statements and cautions of the former board upon this important point may not be uncalled for. The declaration that “the rules must be observed, or disorder, decay and dissolution will soon attend upon this enlightened and praiseworthy effort to open to the people the avenues to a more extensive and genial culture,” cannot be too often or too forcibly impressed upon the minds of the people. **USE CAREFULLY, RETURN PROMPTLY**—these are the two fundamental rules upon which the prosperity of the Library must rest. When these rules shall be disregarded, the Library must cease to exist.

“No change has been made in the rules and regulations established by the former board for the government of the Library. These have been laid before you, and printed by your order. They are contained in the appendix to the first report of the Trustees, and to that report the members of the Council who may desire to become acquainted with their details or more familiar with the history of the Library, are respectfully referred.

“Thus have we, by the experience of a period long enough to

confirm every anticipation and dispel every doubt, demonstrated the practicability and the utility of a Free Public Library.

“To repeat the words of the former board—“ Our library has become one of the institutions of the city.”

“It has become a valuable, and will soon be generally considered as an indispensable auxiliary in the great work of popular education.

“It has become incorporated, both in idea and in fact, into the catalogue of subjects demanding the fostering care and annual support of the municipal government.

“Its claim for such attention and support, are founded upon principles which lie at the foundation of our republican institutions.

“To train and enlighten the public mind is a work to which a liberal portion of the public wealth must be devoted; and as being in harmony with this idea, and as the cap-stone of our beautiful system of public education, the Public Library has claims upon all whose aim is the promotion of the general welfare.

“Such was the *theory* when the work was begun by the State and completed by the City—such is now the *fact*, demonstrated by our experience, and placed beyond the reach of doubt or cavil.

“Upon the minds of the Trustees, the results to which we have arrived, after the operations of the year, have produced the most undoubting conviction that the Free Public Library is an instrumentality from which our community are deriving great and enduring advantages.

“We would give our most unqualified sanction to the principle upon which it is established and sustained.

“We hereby bear testimony to the practicability of the plan of its operation.

“We would, with the earnestness of a strong desire and a most thorough conviction, lay before you the claims of the institution to your continued attention and liberal support.

“Its reputable and profitable support, demands but a small pecuniary outlay; and it is confidently believed that from no portion of our annual appropriations of an equal amount will the people derive more satisfactory and enduring advantages.

“The establishment of a Free Public Library, by the municipal authorities of New Bedford—the pioneer undertaking of the

Commonwealth, has conferred an honorable distinction upon our beloved city, a distinction which it is hoped and believed we shall continue to deserve, by giving it an enlightened and liberal support."

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LIST OF THE INDIVIDUALS AND ASSOCIATIONS WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY THE TRUSTEES :

Andover Theological Institution,  
 American Tract Society,  
 Agassiz, Louis  
 Brown, D. C.  
 Bunker, George M.  
 Babcock, D. H.  
 Bache, A. D., United States Coast Survey,  
 Boyd, Francis  
 Board of Education, State of New York,  
 Board of Agriculture, by Charles L. Flint, Esq., Secretary,  
 Colby, Mrs. H. G. O.  
 Clifford, John H.  
 Congdon, James B.  
 Cary, Henry C.  
 Commissioners of the Boston Public Library, by Hon. R. C.  
 Winthrop,  
 Connecticut Horticultural Society,  
 Commissioner of Patents,  
 Eliot, Thomas D.  
 Fields, James T.  
 Greene, Thomas A.  
 Howland, George Jr.  
 Hartshorn, John  
 Jarvis, Edward  
 Johnson, Charles  
 Kirkbride, Thomas S.  
 Knapp, Shepherd  
 Lindsay & Blakiston,  
 Mason, Charles



McKenzie, Daniel  
 Nye, Asa R.  
 New York, State of  
 Page, J. H. W.  
 Phipps, A. J.  
 Paine, Martin  
 Pennsylvania, State of  
 Russell, Charles  
 Rodman, William Logan  
 Smithsonian Institute,  
 Scudder, Zeno  
 Trustees of the Boston City Library,  
 Trustees of the Pennsylvania Hospital,  
 Taber, Isaac C.  
 Tillinghast, Joseph S.  
 Wood, Mrs. Eliza G.  
 Williams, John E.

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#### EXTRACT FROM THE FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES.

Alluding to the books which had been contributed, the report says :—

“Some of the works thus received are rare and valuable, all useful, and all more than welcome. In accordance with our duty and our rules, we have already expressed our thanks to the generous donors for their valuable contributions. We would, however, in this public and general manner, convey to them on behalf of our City, a renewed declaration of our grateful feelings. May this thoughtful regard for the welfare and progress of our highly cherished Institution continue and increase; so that every year the Trustees may be called upon to discharge the pleasing duty of making public a long and continually lengthening list of its friends and benefactors.”

## BUILDING COMMISSIONERS.

## TRUSTEES OF THE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

GEORGE HOWLAND, JR.,	SIMPSON HART,
ABNER J. PHIPPS,	GEORGE H. DUNBAR,
CHARLES ALMY,	JAMES B. CONGDON.

## COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PROPERTY.

THOMAS WILCOX,	JOHN K. CUSHING,
LEWIS HATHAWAY,	GUSTAVUS DELANO.

## TRUSTEES OF THE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

## FIRST BOARD OF TRUSTEES, 1852.

WILLIAM J. ROTCH, Mayor, President of the Board.

MATTHEW HOWLAND, President of the Common Council.

HENRY H. CRAPO, Chairman of Standing Committee on Public Instruction.

JAMES B. CONGDON, Chosen at Large.

ABNER J. PHIPPS,           “           “

SIMPSON HART,           “           “

A. J. PHIPPS, Clerk.

## SECOND BOARD, 1853.

RODNEY FRENCH, Mayor, President of the Board.

MATTHEW HOWLAND, President of the Common Council.

ISAAC C. TABER, Chairman of Standing Committee on Public Instruction.

JAMES B. CONGDON, Chosen at Large.

SIMPSON HART,           “           “

ABNER J. PHIPPS,           “           “

## THIRD BOARD, 1854.

RODNEY FRENCH, Mayor, President of the Board.

THOMAS WILCOX, President of the Common Council.

ISAAC C. TABER, Chairman of Standing Committee on Public Instruction.

JAMES B. CONGDON, Chosen at Large.

SIMPSON HART,           “           “

ABNER J. PHIPPS,       “           “

## FOURTH BOARD, 1855.

GEORGE HOWLAND, JR., Mayor, President of the Board.

JOHN W. NICKERSON, President of the Common Council.

CRANSTON WILCOX, Chairman of Standing Committee on Public Instruction.

JAMES B. CONGDON, Chosen at Large.

ABNER J. PHIPPS,       “           “

SIMPSON HART,         “           “

## FIFTH BOARD, 1856.

GEORGE HOWLAND, JR., Mayor, President of the Board.

ABNER J. PHIPPS, President of the Common Council.

CHARLES ALMY, Chairman of Standing Committee on Public Instruction.

JAMES B. CONGDON, Chosen at Large.

SIMPSON HART,         “           “

GEORGE H. DUNBAR,   “           “

## NOTES

TO THE ADDRESS OF JAMES B. CONGDON.

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### NOTE A.

William Rotch was born at Nantucket, in the year 1734. He was the oldest son of Joseph Rotch, who moved to that place from Salisbury, in this State, where he engaged successfully in the whaling business. William Rotch was early in life a prominent man. He was, like his father, engaged in whaling, and during the war of the Revolution, lost sixty thousand dollars, by the capture of his vessels. The peace brought no relief—for England was the only market for sperm oil, and, now a foreign country, had imposed a duty upon the article, which would not allow it to be sent there. Soon after the peace, we find Mr. Rotch in England, closeted with William Pitt, urging, but without success, upon the Great Commoner, the importance of the Fishery. Disappointed there, he crosses the Channel, obtains from England's great rival the aid demanded, and very soon establishes the business firmly at Dunkirk. In 1793, believing war with England inevitable, he left France, and after a short tarry in England, arrived in Boston, Sept. 23d, 1794. The next year he removed from Nantucket to New Bedford. His father had purchased a valuable property in Acushnet, as early as 1765, calling the village Bedford. On his return from France, Mr. Rotch found his son William Rotch, Jr., settled in the new and thriving town of New Bedford, and a house ready for him that his son had erected. That house (now the Mansion House, the property of the Hon. T. D. Eliot,) he occupied until his death, in the year 1828, at the advanced age of ninety-four years. No justice is done to William



Rotch by such a barren outline. But more is not here allowable. That part of his life, embraced between the breaking out of the war of the Revolution and his removal to this town, in 1795, a period of twenty years, was crowded with interesting events. Full of enterprise, but sagacious and prudent as he was active, his business operations were extensive and absorbing. With talents of a high order, and with a heart full of love and good will to all, his native town looked to him for counsel and aid in every emergency. A prominent and consistent member of a religious society whose views were peculiar, and whose testimonies it was hard to maintain either in Revolutionary America or in Revolutionary France, he was fearless and uncompromising in avowing, maintaining and diffusing them. I have seen a narrative of this part of the life of William Rotch, dictated by him in his eightieth year. No one can read it and dispute his claim to an exalted rank as a Merchant, a Philanthropist and a Christian.

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#### NOTE B.

Dr. John Brewer, of Philadelphia. He was the first Principal of the Friends Academy. He was appointed in 1811, and was connected with the institution six years.

Thomas A. Greene, Esq., of this city. Mr. Greene was for some time an assistant teacher, and when first appointed Principal he was associated in the office with Moses Moody.

Hon. J. H. W. Page, formerly and for many years of this city, now a resident of Brighton, doing business in Boston.

A. J. Phipps, Esq., of this city, President of the Common Council, and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Library. He was appointed Principal in 1847, and is still connected with the institution, as Principal of the Boys' Department.

That veteran teacher, John F. Emerson, Esq., Principal of the High School, was at one time an assistant teacher at the Friends Academy. He has been a teacher in this city, thirty years, and for twenty-one years he has been at the head of the High School. If ever retiring pensions are justifiable it is in such cases as this. The long, faithful and successful labors of Mr. Emerson as a Pub-

lic School teacher, entitle him to the consideration and gratitude of every citizen. And he does not stand alone. We have many faithful toilers in this field, whom all men *should*, and all thoughtful men *do*, delight to honor.

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#### NOTE C.

George Howland was born in Fairhaven, then a part of the town of Dartmouth, July 12th, 1781. The place of his birth was then known as a part of Acushnet, which included the territory that was, after the division of the town of Dartmouth, incorporated as the town of New Bedford, afterwards divided into New Bedford and Fairhaven.

His parents subsequently resided in New Bedford.

He was early placed in the counting-room of William Rotch, Jr., where his remarkable aptitude for mercantile pursuits soon developed itself, and led to many profitable business operations before he became of age. His career as a merchant was protracted and successful. He was the first President of the Bedford Commercial Bank, which office he held until his death, a period of thirty-six years. He was for many years a trustee of the Friends Academy. He died May 21, 1852, leaving behind him a large estate and an unblemished reputation.

The following are the provisions of his will respecting the School for Young Females :—

“FOURTH; I give to my sons *George Howland, Jr., Augustus Howland, Matthew Howland, Charles W. Howland,* and *Robert B. Howland,* and my sons-in-law *William H. Chase* and *Samuel B. Parsons,* and the survivors of them, and their associates and successors forever, the sum of *Fifty Thousand dollars,* in SPECIAL TRUST, that they shall invest the same from time to time, with their best skill and judgment, and apply so much of the accumulated income thereof as they may think expedient, to the procuring of suitable grounds, buildings, apparatus &c., for a School for *Young Females,* and apply the income of the balance of said fund, to maintain such school, it being my desire that said school should be established as soon as it conveniently can be, and I hereby authorize my said Trustees, until said school shall be established, to apply the income of said fund after erecting said buildings, and

procuring suitable grounds, apparatus &c., for such school, for the benefit of any other school or schools, or add the same to the capital fund at their discretion.

My present views would be in favor of establishing said School somewhere in the County of Cayuga, in the State of New York, but I leave the location entirely to my Trustees aforesaid. I authorize and empower my said Trustees to name their own successors in office as vacancies may occur, and so on from time to time, and also to increase the number of Trustees to any number not exceeding twelve, *provided always*, that for the sake of harmony, all Trustees shall be members of the Society of Friends, and being disowned shall disqualify a person for holding said office, and vacate the office if he is a Trustee. If the said Trustees shall think it expedient it would be my wish that they should get an act of incorporation for said school. It is not my wish that said school should be exclusively for children of Friends, but that it should be open to all, under such regulations as may be prescribed by the Trustees. I do not enjoin it, but I recommend to my children upon the decease of my beloved wife, *Susan Howland*, to add to the fund for the said school, the further sum of *Fifty Thousand dollars* from the Capital sum of *One Hundred Thousand dollars* appropriated by the second clause of this Will. And I authorize my Executors and Trustees in said second clause named, to appropriate the said further sum to that purpose if they shall think it expedient. I do not undertake to enter into details, or to prescribe minute rules for said school, but trust to the sound discretion of my said Trustees and their successors. I wish particularly to impress upon the minds of my children, and of the community, the sense which I entertain of the vast importance of thorough moral, intellectual and religious training of Young Females, and my strong desire, that this fund may be applied in the best manner to that great object."

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#### NOTE D.

George Howland bestowed upon the Friends School at Haverford, Pennsylvania, the sum of fifteen thousand dollars. His son, the present Mayor of New Bedford, is a trustee of that institution.

The sum of five thousand dollars was bestowed by him upon a school in North Carolina.

## NOTE E.

William Rotch, Jun., was born at Nantucket. About the time that his father went abroad, he removed to New Bedford, and for many years was prominent among us as an enlightened and successful merchant, and a useful and honored citizen; his ear and heart ever open to the call of the needy, and his ample means always ready for their relief; holding a high and honorable position in the religious society to which he belonged, and reflecting honor upon his profession and his station, by an humble, consistent, christian deportment in all the relations and circumstances of life.

His first residence was on Water street, at the corner of William. The spacious house he then occupied, removed back to First street, is now, by the bounty of his daughter, a Home for the Sailor. The elegant mansion on County street, occupied by him at the time of his death, is now the residence of Edward C. Jones, Esq.

He died April 17th, 1850, aged 90 years.

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## NOTE F.

Samuel Rodman was a man who combined in his character many rare excellencies. As a merchant he was prudent, methodical, diligent and enlightened. To do business, and to do it properly and uprightly, was with him, a work which called for the exercise of high intellectual powers, constant attention and an exalted christian aim. He looked upon the calling of a merchant as one, at the same time honorable and responsible, alike as a whole and in its details. To a late period of his life he was his own book-keeper, perfect in method and execution. It is said that he never gave a note except to the Insurance Company. In form he was tall and erect, in manners refined and courteous, in his dress a model of gentility and neatness. He was owner of the ship Maria, of this port, now about 80 years old, and for thirty years she had no name but his on her register. He was one of the original board of trustees of the Friends Academy, and contributed two thousand dollars towards its endowment.

He was born in Newport, R. I., November 11, 1753, and died in this city, December 24, 1835.



## NOTE G.

Elizabeth Rodman, the daughter of William Rotch, the sister of William Rotch, Jr., and wife of Samuel Rodman, was born at Nantucket, Dec. 9, 1757, and died in this city, August 2, 1856. Until a short period before she died, her mental faculties remained unimpaired. All who knew her will readily agree to the applicability of the quotation, in which I have substituted the name of this excellent woman for that of the celebrated Berkley, Bishop of London.

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## NOTE H.

Charity Rodman Rotch, was the sister of Samuel Rodman, and was born at Newport, R. I., Oct. 31, 1766. She married Thomas Rotch, son of William Rotch,

Her nephew, Samuel Rodman, Jr., Esq., of this city, thus speaks of her :

“Charity Rotch was my father’s youngest sister. She was rightly named. She had a most benevolent heart. Among my earliest recollections of her, probably in 1800, she had a weekly levee of Freetown mendicants at my uncle’s house, corner of Water and William streets, giving them her sympathy and such aid as she could, and acting as the almoner of others whom she could interest in behalf of the poor and afflicted. She died August 6, 1824, at Kendal, Ohio.”

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## NOTE I.

The Four Corners was the village head-quarters for many years. A painting, accurate and beautiful, of this part of Bedford village, has been executed by our fellow-citizen, William Allen Wall.

The building alluded to is Nos. 12 and 14 Water street, now occupied by our fellow-citizen, Josiah B. King.

It was for many years occupied by William Sawyer Wall, who, while he carried on the business of a smith, kept a small stock of hardware.

Various mechanical occupations have been followed in the upper

part of the building ; and the writer of this has in his eye two residents of Sixth street, both occupying beautiful and costly residences, who, as well as our friend Allen, worked as mechanics' apprentices in that building.

It has lately been finely fitted up, and looks as if it was *good* for another half century. It was owned by the Rotch family, but is now the property of William C. Taber.

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#### NOTE J.

This building is now No. 26 Union street, and is occupied by Messrs. Shaw & Bro. The lower part was for many years a dry goods store.

The office of the New Bedford Mercury was formerly in this building, and the Old Colony Gazette, a democratic paper that had a short existence among us, was printed there.

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#### NOTE K.

Abraham Shearman, Jr., was born April 4th, 1777, in that part of the town of Dartmouth then called Acushnet, now Fairhaven.

After serving an apprenticeship to the printing business, he commenced the publication of a weekly newspaper, called the "Columbian Courier." The first number was issued Dec. 8, 1798, and the last March 1, 1805. This was the second paper published in New Bedford ; it having been preceded by the "Medley," published by his master, John Spooner. The issue of the latter ceased soon after the Courier was commenced. There are several volumes in our Public Library printed by Mr. Shearman. He became a member of the Society of Friends about the time that he discontinued his paper. For thirty years he was engaged in business as a bookseller. His store was what is now No. 45 Union street, owned by William C. Taber, and still devoted to the same business by his successors, Messrs. Charles Taber & Co. He died Dec. 26th, 1847, establishing by his Will two funds, the income of one to be devoted to charitable, the other to educational purposes. His "Lines to Lord Byron" may be found in an early number of the "Christian Disciple."

## NOTE L.

John Pickens was the first town-clerk of New Bedford, and held the office from the year 1787 to 1792.

He was cashier of the Bedford Bank, the first banking institution established among us, whose charter expired, it is believed, in the year 1811 or 1812. Thomas Hazard, Jr., was President.

He was again elected town-clerk in 1815, and held the office five years. He was, for many years, the only land-surveyor in the village.

## NOTE M.

William Sawyer Wall was born at Rock, near Bewdley, in England, April 5th, 1767.

He was a young man when he came to this country, and always highly respected and beloved.

He was a friend and correspondent of the celebrated William Allen, of London, for whom he named his oldest son, our fellow-citizen, William A. Wall, the artist. He died 13th Nov. 1815.

## NOTE N.

The Dialectic Society was formed about the year 1811. It was a new organization, with a change of name, of the "Tirocinium Society."

The objects of the association were intellectual culture, and social intercourse.

The exercises were mostly debates upon questions previously agreed upon. Several formal addresses were delivered before the Society, and many papers of great ability were written by the members and read at its meetings.

Only one of these addresses was printed. It was delivered Sept. 1st, 1817, by John Mason Williams, then a resident of New Bedford. A copy is now before me. It is an address of singular ability and beauty. William Sawyer Wall, Abraham Shearman,

Jr., John Howland, Jr., Jeremiah Winslow, Samuel Rodman, Jr., Thomas Rotch, John Summers Russell, James Arnold, Thomas A. Greene, Lemuel Williams, Jr., John Mason Williams, and William Baker, are remembered as among the early members. The three first were, it is believed, Presidents in the order they are named.

A more satisfactory sketch of this Society could have been given, had not the records been lost. It is about thirty-five years since the last meeting was held, and it is not now known where the papers and records are. There was a valuable seal belonging to the Society. Should this paragraph meet the eye of any one who can give any information respecting these articles, it is to be hoped that he will make it public.

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#### NOTE O.

Elisha Thornton was born in Smithfield, April 30th, 1747, and died in New Bedford, Dec. 31st, 1816. He lived in this town about nine years. He was not only a sound, but a most attractive preacher. In the published testimony of the Smithfield Monthly Meeting it is said of him, that "he was a man of quick apprehension and capacious mind, of an edifying and instructive conversation, deeply concerned for the welfare of the whole human family; he labored faithfully in tenderness and love for an advancement in the way of holiness, with a mind clothed with universal charity and benevolence. Rarely has a man been so generally beloved and respected among us."

The term "chant-like" will be well understood by all who ever heard Friend Thornton preach.

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#### NOTE P.

James Davis was born in Rochester, May 22nd, 1744, and died in this town, February 25th, 1825.

Extract from the appendix to an address by J. B. Congdon, at the consecration of the Oak Grove Cemetery, Oct. 6th, 1843:



“ It has been stated that no ordained minister of the gospel has died in this town. Within this enclosure (the Friends Burying Ground) lies the dust of one, who, although a minister without the “laying on of hands,” was one of the most faithful who ever declared the glad tidings of the gospel to his fellow-man. There are many among us who can never forget the venerable form of James Davis. And still less likely are any of those who heard him preach, to forget those earnest, solemn, affectionate appeals, which so often caused the tear of contrition to flow, and the desire for a state of purity and peace to rise into dominion in the soul.”



